

As I cam nevere, I kan nat tellen wher.
Therefore I stynte, I nam no divinistre;
Of soules fynde I nat in this registre,
Ne me ne list thilke opinions to telle
Of hem, though that they writen wher they dwelle.
Arcite is coold, ther Mars his soule gye;
Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.

SRIGHT Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
And Theseus his suster took anon
Swownyng, & baar hire fro the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To tellen how she weeped, both eve and morwe?
for in swich cas wommen can have swich sorwe,
Whan that hir housbonds ben from hem ago,
That for the moore part they sorwen so,
Or ellis fallen in swich maladye,
That at the laste certainly they dye.

¶ Infinite been the sorwes and the teeres
Of olde folk, and eek of tendre yeeres,
In all the toun for deeth of this Theban;
for hym ther wepeth bothe child and man;
So greet a wepyng was ther noon certayn,
Whan Ector was ybrought al fressh yslayn
To Troye: Alas! the pitee that was ther,
Crachyng of chekes, rentyng eek of heer.

¶ Why woldestow be deed? thise wommen crye,
And haddest gold ynough, and Emelye?

Man ne myghte gladen Theseus,
Savyng his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes transmutacioun,
As he hadde seyn it chaungen, up and down,
Joye after wo, and wo after gladnesse;
And shewed hem ensamples and liknesse.
¶ Right as ther dyed nevere man, quod he,
That he ne lyvede in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther lyvede nevere man, he seyde,
In al this world, that some tyme he ne deyde.
This world nys but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we been pilgrymes, passyng to and fro;
Deeth is an ende of every worldly soore.

¶ And over al this yet seyde he muchel moore
To this effect, ful wisely to enhorde
The peple, that they sholde hem reconforte.

AC Theseus, with all his bisy cure,
Cast busily wher that the sepulture
Of goode Arcite may best ymaked be,
And eek moost honorable in his degree.
And at the laste he took conclusioun,
That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun
Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
That in that selve grove, swoote and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amoureuse desires,
His compleynte, and for love his hootte fires,
He wolde make a fyr in which thoffice
Of funeral he myghte al accomplye;
And leet comande anon to hakke and hewe
The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe
In colpons, wel arrayed for to brenne.
His officers with swifte feet they renne,
And ryde anon at his comandement.

¶ And after this, Theseus hath ysent
After a beere, and it al overspradde
With clooth of gold, the richeste that he hadde;

And of the same suyte he cladde Arcite.
Upon his hondes hadde he gloves white,
Eek on his heed a croune of laurer grene,
And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.
He leyde hym, bare the visage, on the beere.
Therwith he weep that pitee was to heere;
And, for the peple sholde seen hym alle,
Whan it was day, he broghte hym to the halle,
That roreth of the crying and the soun.

HO cam this woful Theban Palamoun,
With floutry berd, and rugged asschy heeres,
In clothes blake, ydropped al with teeres;
And passyng othere of wepyng, Emelye,
The rewefullest of al the compaignye.

¶ In as muche as the servyce sholde be
The moore noble and riche in his degree,
Duc Theseus leet forth thre steedes bryng,
That trapped were in steel al gliteryng,
And covered with the armes of daun Arcite.
Upon thise steedes, that weren grete and white,
Ther sitten folk, of whiche oon baar his sheeld,
Another his spere up in his hondes heeld;
And the thridde baar with hym his bowe Turkeys,
Of brend gold was the caas, and eek the harneys,
And riden forth a paas with sorweful cheere
Toward the grove, as ye shul after heere.

THE nobleste of the Grekes that ther were,
Upon hir shuldres caryeden the beere,
With stake paas, and eyen rede and wete,
Thurghout the citee, by the maister-strete,
That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye
Right of the same is al the strete ywrye.

UPON the right hond wente olde Egeus,
And on that oother syde duc Theseus,
With vessels in hir hond of gold ful fyn
Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn:
Eek Palamoun with ful greet compaignye,
And after that cam woful Emelye,
With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse,
To do thoffice of funeral servyse.

NIGH labour, and ful greet apparail
lyng,
Was at the service and the fyr-mak-
yng,
That with his grene top the heven
raughte.

And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte,
This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.
Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a lode;
But how the fyr was makid up on highte,
And eek the names that the trees highte,
As ook, firre, birch, aspe, alder, holm, popeler,
Wylugh, elm, plane, assch, box, chasteyn, lynde,
laurer,
Mapul, thorn, bech, hasel, ew, whippeltre,
How they weren feld, shal nat be toold for me;
Ne how the goddes rennen up and down,
Disherited of hire habitacioun,
In whiche they woneden in reste and pees,
Nymphus, and fawnes, and amadrides;
Ne how the beestes and the briddes alle
fledde for fere, whan the wode was falle;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,

That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright;
Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,
And thanne with drye stokkes, cloven a thre,
And thanne with grene wode and spicerye,
And thanne with clooth of gold, and with perrye,
And gerlandes, hangyng with ful many a flour,
The mirre, thencens, with al so greet odour;
Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
Ne what riches aboute his body is;
Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;
Ne how she swowned whan men made fyr,
Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr,
Ne what jeweles men in the fyre caste,
Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste;
Ne how somme caste hir sheeld, & somme hir spere,
And of hire vestiments, whiche that they were,
And copped ful of wyn, and milk, and blood,
Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes, with an huge route,
Chryes they riden al the fyr aboute
Upon the left hand, with a loud shoutyng,
And thryes with hir spers clateryng,
And thryes how the ladyes gonne crye;
And how that lad was homward Emelye;
Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;
Ne how that lyche wake was yholde
Al thilke nyght; ne how the Grekes pleye
The wakepleyes; ne kepe I nat to seye
Who wastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,
Ne who that baar hym best, in no disjoynt.
I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
hoom til Atthenes whan the pley is doon;
But shortly to the point thanne wol I wende,
And maken of my longe tale an ende.

By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres,
Al styntyd is the moornyng and the teres.
Of Grekes, by oon general assent
Thanne semed me ther was a parlement
At Atthenes, upon certain poynts and caas;
Among the whiche poynts yspoken was,
To have with certain contrees alliaunce,
And have fully of Thebens obeissaunce.
for which this noble Theseus anon
Leet senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of hym what was the cause and why;
But in his blake clothes sorwefully
he cam at his comandement in hye.
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye.

Whan they were set, and hust was at the place,
And Theseus abiden hadde a space
Er any word cam fram his wise brest,
his eyen sette he ther as was his lest,
And with a sad visage he sikid stille,
And after that right thus he seyde his wille.

THE firste moevere of the cause above,
Whan he first made the faire cheyne of love,
Greet was the effect, & heigh was his entente;
Wel wiste he why, and what therof he mente;
for with that faire cheyne of love he bond
The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond,
In certeyn boundes that they may nat flee.
That same prince, and that moevere, quod he,
hath stablissed, in this wretched world adoun,

Certeine dayes and duracioun
To al that is engendred in this place,
Over the whiche day they may nat pace,
Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;
Ther nedeth noon auctoritee allegge,
for it is preeved by experience,
But that me list declaren my sentence.
Thanne may men by this ordre wel discerne,
That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.
Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,
That every part dirryveth from his hool.
for nature hath nat take his bigynnyng
Of no partie ne cantel of a thyng,
But of a thyng that parfit is and stable,
Descendyng so, til it be corruptible.
And therefore of his wise purveiaunce,
he hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,
That spesces of thynges and progressiouns
Shullen endure by successiouns,
And nat eterne, withouten any lye;
This maystow understonde, and seen at eye.

¶ Loo the ook, that hath so long a norisshyng
from tyme that it first bigynneth spryng,
And hath so long a lif, as we may see,
Yet at the laste wasted is the tree.

¶ Considereth eek how that the harde stoon
Under oure feet, on which we trede and goon,
Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye;
The brode ryver somtyme wexeth dreye;
The grete toures se we wane and wende;
Thanne may ye se that al this thyng hath ende.

¶ Of man and womman seen we wel also,
That nedeth in oon of thise termes two,
This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,
he moot be deed, the kyng as shal a page;
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large feeld, as men may se;
Ther helpeth nocht, al goth that ilke weye:
Thanne may I seyn that al this thyng moot deye.

¶ What maketh this but Juppiter, the kyng?
The which is prince, and cause of alle thyng,
Converynge al unto his propre welle,
from which it is dirryved, sooth to telle.
And hereagayns no creature on lyve,
Of no degree, availleth for to stryve.
¶ Thanne is it wysdom, as it thynketh me,
To maken vertu of necessitee,
And take it weel that we may not eschue,
And namely that, that to us alle is due.
And whoso grucheth ought, he dooth folye,
And rebel is to hym that al may gye;
And certainly a man hath moost honour,
To dyen in his excellence and flour,
Whan he is siker of his goode name.
Thanne hath he doon his freend ne hym no shame,
And gladder oghte his freend been of his deeth,
Whan with honour upyolden is his breeth,
Than whan his name apalled is for age,
for al forgeten is his vassellage.
Thanne is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dyen whan that he is best of name.

THE contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.
¶ Why gruchen we, why have we hevynesse
That good Arcite, of chivalrye the flour,